
Presenting Canadian Values in LINC: The Roles of Textbooks and Teachers

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A survey of 63 employees in LINC programs in Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta indicated that the mandate of LINC to incorporate information on "Canadian values" remains partly unfulfilled. Although professionally trained ESL instructors may be equipped to incorporate Canadian values into the content of classroom instruction, those who lack specific preparation are likely to rely on published texts. We analyzed 67 textbooks used in LINC programs. In general, most of the materials have little in the way of Canadian content and even less in the way of Canadian values. The survey responses suggested that some teachers dealt with general Canadian values if they came up in class; others, however, felt that it was inappropriate to deal with such complex topics in LINC programs and that the proficiency level of LINC students was an obstacle. Most teachers felt that survival English was paramount in LINC.

Une enquête auprès de 63 employés des programmes CLIC en Ontario, en Colombie Britannique et en Alberta a conclu que le mandat de CLIC, soit d'incorporer des éléments sur les "valeurs canadiennes", n'est pas entièrement réalisé. Bien que les enseignants ALS ayant une formation professionnelle puissent être en mesure d'intégrer des valeurs canadiennes dans leur curriculum, ceux sans formation précise auront tendance à recourir à des textes publiés. Une analyse de 67 manuels employés dans les programmes CLIC a révélé que, de façon générale, le matériel pédagogique avait peu de contenu canadien et évoquait encore moins des valeurs canadiennes. Les réponses des employés enquêtés laissent supposer que les enseignants abordent la question des valeurs canadiennes de manière globale si elle se présente pendant les cours; d'autres croient qu'il n'est pas approprié de traiter ce genre de questions complexes dans un programme CLIC et que la compétence langagière des étudiants constituait un obstacle à ce type d'activité. La plupart des enseignants étaient d'avis que le but essentiel du programme CLIC était l'acquisition d'une compétence langagière de base.

On June 1, 1992, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) was introduced in English-speaking Canada. At that time, the Ministry of Employment and Immigration indicated that through its new approach, "real client language needs [would] be met and that clients with similar needs [would] have access to equivalent types of training regardless of where they settle[d] in Canada" (Employment and Immigration Canada,

November, 1992, p. 2). Replacing earlier federal English as a second language (ESL) programs, LINC was an attempt to increase accessibility, quality, consistency, and cost-effectiveness, while being flexible enough to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse clientele (Employment and Immigration Canada, August, 1991). Furthermore, the new language training policy called for greater incorporation of "information on Canadian values into training programs" (Employment and Immigration Canada, August 1991, p. 2) as opposed to the previous emphasis on language for employment. This change was initially controversial; there were differences in views concerning the feasibility of the approach and its implications for curriculum.

The Role of Textbooks

Although the curriculum obviously encompasses more than books, textbooks can be the core of much instruction. This is particularly true in contexts where teachers lack the preparation to independently incorporate contextually appropriate content in their classes. Although it is true that many LINC instructors have the education that allows them to do this, some do not. In many private programs, for example, ESL teachers' salaries are not commensurate with high levels of TESL preparation; as a result, many LINC programs attract only minimally qualified or unqualified instructors. Given that some teachers may be unprepared to teach "Canadian values," the appropriate choice of commercial materials is important. Richards (1984) argues that the successful adoption of a particular approach to language teaching relies on its availability in published material. Second-language instruction with supporting published materials is far more likely to be used than approaches that rely solely on teachers' creativity. Textbook-based methods can be used by those who lack professional preparation, allowing language programs to operate in conditions where there is a shortage of fully qualified instructors. The advent of LINC brought about dramatic changes in language provision, including considerable privatization without concomitant professional development requirements, thus leading to a potentially heavy reliance on textbooks in many programs.

The Content of Textbooks

The importance of textbooks to LINC's ultimate success makes establishing the nature of their content of critical importance. The notion that content can be presented in the language classroom without interfering with language acquisition is now widely accepted. In fact, not only will content not interfere with language acquisition, but it will benefit it. There is considerable evidence to suggest that content-based instruction, where explicit focus on language structure is limited to forms that pose difficulties for the learners, can make a significant contribution to language learning, as is the case with immersion programs (Genesee, 1998; Mohan, 1986). A content-based ap-

proach to language teaching emphasizes the use of interesting and, where possible, authentic content as the basis for language instruction and exposure. Not only does this approach facilitate language acquisition, but it simultaneously results in content learning (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). Furthermore, authentic content can contribute to the development of socially and culturally appropriate language forms as decontextualized language input cannot (Byram & Risager, 1999; Genesee, 1998). Clearly, content-based ESL instruction is a good match for LINC. As Cameron, Derwing, and Munro (1991) have pointed out, the choice of Canadian content in Canadian adult ESL programs can enhance cultural knowledge while at the same time providing continuity for the duration of a course.

The Content of Culture

Given these developments in language teaching, it is somewhat surprising that at LINC's inception, the availability of ESL resources containing relevant Canadian content was limited. Obstacles in developing acceptable materials for LINC have been attributed to the difficulty in articulating the essence of Canadian culture (Courchene, 1996; Ilieva, 2000; Sauvé, 1996). Indeed, there can be heated disagreement about which cultural content is legitimately Canadian and which is even relevant to particular contexts.

The notion that culture and language are inextricably intertwined is agreed on by many (Byram, 1991; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Risager, 1991). Byram and Risager (1999) argue that because natural language develops through social interactions, it must necessarily be organized to express cultural values. Hence understanding the culture is essential to understanding the semantics and pragmatics of the target language. What is contentious is how best to present language and culture in the classroom. (For an exhaustive review of culture learning in language classes, see Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 1998.) Some authors question that presenting culture as classroom content is even possible (Fleming, 2003). Many believe that learning culture can be accomplished only through ethnographic approaches involving direct observation (Cleghorn, 2000; Cortazzi & Jin, 1991; Haneda, 2002; Ilieva, 2001; Paige et al., 1998). Such an approach would demand more emphasis on teacher preparation and extensive opportunities for interaction with Canadians outside the classroom.

Courchène (1996) believes that culture can indeed be taught as explicit content, but he suggests that it also needs to be learned implicitly through exposure to shared values. If the goal for inclusion of "Canadian values" in LINC classrooms is to be met, the content should not only focus on cultural facts about history and people, but should also provide for implicit learning such as "full-fledged discussions about the complexities and contradictions of [the immigrant's new] society" (Derwing, Jamieson, & Munro, 1998, p. 395).

As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) suggest, culture is not simply course content; it is a dynamic process in which learners are shaped and reshaped:

Culture can be seen as the framework of assumptions, ideas, and beliefs that are used to interpret other people's actions, words and patterns of thinking. This framework is necessarily subjective and is commonly taken for granted. However, it is crucial that [second] language learners should become aware of differing cultural frameworks, both their own and those of others; otherwise they will use their own cultural system to interpret target-language messages whose intended meaning may well be predicated on quite different cultural assumptions. (p. 197)

Another less direct approach to learning culture involves teaching aimed at helping students become more tolerant of ambiguity rather than instruction in specific aspects of culture (Byram, 1991; Ilieva, 2001). Recognizing that the socialization processes of L1 learners cannot be replicated, culture should be *explored* rather than *taught*. In this view, rather than being presented with discrete facts, students should be encouraged to engage in self-reflection (Kane, 1991; Sauv  , 1996). They should be helped to view culture not only as specific knowledge, but as a mutually constructed entity (Fleming, 2003).

The State of "Cultural Values" Teaching in LINC Today

The issue of the role of cultural values in the LINC classroom continues to be a controversial topic. Although ideally the solution is for all instructors to be well prepared for the teaching of culture, this is not the case. Hence textbooks remain an important resource. Eight years ago, Courch  ne (1996) commented that the emerging commercial and government-produced ESL publications designed to meet LINC's new focus "mark the beginning of [the] process" (p. 8) of articulating a coherent description of what it means to be Canadian. More recently, Ilieva (2000) conducted an analysis of an excerpt from one Canadian commercial ESL textbook and demonstrated the potential problems associated with reliance on Canadian commercial material as a basis for cultural exploration. Part of the problem lies in a paradox between some teachers' reliance on textbooks on the one hand, and the dynamic nature of culture as defined above. The content of textbooks is necessarily static and often contextually generic. Beyond the presentation of discrete cultural facts, however, it is possible for textbooks to provide a framework for the discussion of dynamic and contextually relevant aspects of culture.

In this article, we examine the degree to which the materials available to and used by LINC programs in Canada actually reflect the type of Canadian focus that was intended by the shift in language training policy. We consider to what extent these materials have contributed to the creation of a detailed Canadian culture corpus for explicit aspects of Canadian culture and a starting point for exploring the implicit, less discrete aspects of Canadian culture.

Furthermore, we will examine teachers' views on teaching "Canadian values." This is one aspect of a larger study conducted in collaboration with colleagues at the Université de Montréal. In Quebec, French as a second language programs use relatively uniform materials for the francophonization of newcomers. These materials were designed specifically for the purpose of developing cultural awareness and facilitating integration into Quebec society.

We conducted a survey adapted from Vermette, Jacquet, and McAndrew (2000) in which we addressed four issues: (a) To what degree do materials used in LINC meet the Canadian values mandate? (b) Which cultural values do teachers believe should be taught in their LINC classes, regardless of the texts available? (c) How do teachers fill perceived gaps in the material available? and (d) What obstacles do teachers face in implementing LINC's Canadian values mandate?

Methodology

Participants

Using ESL program directories, we selected programs in the three English-speaking provinces with the most LINC students: Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta. We contacted representatives from a range of providers: large and small, public and private. In total, 46 teachers and 17 administrators responded to the survey, representing 44 programs. When we examined the responses, we first looked to see whether there were differences in the nature of the answers provided by teachers and administrators. With the exception of the question regarding gaps in the material, to which roughly half the administrators responded that the teachers would have a better idea, the two sets of respondents provided similar answers. For this reason we collapsed the two groups, and thus we had a total of 63 survey participants.

Data Collection

To give respondents a chance to consider the questions, we first sent the survey for their review, then established a time to conduct a 45-minute telephone interview. We asked the participants which materials they used in LINC classes and how often they used them. In total, 100 texts were identified. Of these, only a few were used widely across classes and programs.

Materials Evaluation

We located as many of the materials as we could (some were out of print, and in other cases, respondents had incorrectly recalled the titles, making them impossible to locate). In total we analyzed 67 of the 100 texts, including all those identified by two or more programs. We determined that 37% (25) of the materials were Canadian commercial texts, 17% (11) were government publications, and 46% (31) were United States textbooks.

We then examined the content of each text according to seven categories that represented the range of cultural content (see Table 1). We defined six of the categories as explicit cultural knowledge. These included (a) geography of Canada, (b) history, (c) government, (d) law/policy, (e) functional language skills for integration, and (f) cultural facts. The seventh category was defined as cultural values, that is, implicit content. By *implicit* we mean content that was aimed at what Courchène (1996) called consciousness-raising. This is content that facilitates noticing behaviors and values in the real world, and which over time may lead to the acquisition of the value itself, or at least to an understanding of it. Although the foundations of some of these values can be described in an intellectual sense, the values themselves are essentially intangible, because by their very nature they are experiential. For example, although we can describe some manifestations of the value of acceptance of diversity to students, experiencing it potentially requires transforming one's world view. By including both *explicit* cultural content and frameworks for developing *implicit* content, we account for both static and dynamic aspects of cultural exploration provided by textbooks.

Having established the assessment criteria, we then evaluated the materials according to the number of pages of novel content for each category and whether the content was Canadian-specific or simply North American. We also calculated the ratio of cumulative cultural content to the total number of pages in each text. As might be expected in language texts, a considerable portion focused on language exercises. Thus if we consider the book *Canada, Coast to Coast* (Acosta, 1999) using the content schema in Table 1, 60 of the 139 pages (43%) have novel Canadian content. This is a high proportion as the remaining 57% of the text is necessarily dedicated to language practice ac-

Table 1
Cultural Content Assessment Scheme

<i>Content type</i>	<i>Content categories</i>
Explicit content	1. Geography (e.g., maps of Canada)
	2. History (e.g., John A. MacDonald)
	3. Government (e.g., Parliamentary system)
	4. Law/Policy (e.g., Charter of Rights)
	5. Functional Skills (e.g., filling out an employment application)
	6. Cultural Facts (e.g., descriptions of people/places/food)
Implicit content	7. Cultural Values (e.g., multiculturalism, peace, civil responsibilities)

tivities and review. We set a threshold of 25% of pages dedicated to novel Canadian content as being substantial.

Results

To what degree do the materials used in LINC meet the Canadian values mandate?

We found that a significant subset of the commercial texts that claimed to be Canadian (64% or 16/25) actually had little or no substantive Canadian content. "Canadian" titles are not necessarily indicative of meaningful Canadian content: 32% (8/25) of the texts purporting to be Canadian could have been set anywhere in North America. The only distinguishing features were Canadian place names and Canadian money. In other words, Wall Street has been changed to Bay Street, but for all intents and purposes, there is nothing distinctively Canadian in these books.

In fact, what serves as cultural content varies widely. The Canadian content of some texts was focused primarily on factual information such as the story of Laura Secord (Brock, 1995), rather than addressing more abstract concepts such as multiculturalism. Although some argue that language cannot exist without culture (Byram, 1991; Courchène, 1996), the reality is that the two have often been dichotomized as the four skills and culture (Kramsch, 1993); many texts relegate culture to end-of-chapter tidbits (Byram, 1991). In such texts, there is no recognition of underlying value systems; instead the focus is on superficial, supposedly static manifestations. The most common approaches to teaching culture are usually characterized by descriptions of cultural facts and behaviors, ignoring the complexity and ambiguity of the cultural experience as a social construct (Guest, 2002; Ilieva, 2001; Kramsch, 1993; Weber, 2001). This is unfortunate, because developing an understanding of these larger concepts is precisely what could have an effect on students' lives during the initial stages of acculturation. In addition, much of the content appears to be written from a general middle-class perspective, a problem noted by Sauv   (1996), for example, stories about the Royal family (Berish & Thibaut, 1992). Although such topics in and of themselves may be useful to some students, they are inadequate; a greater range of topics with relevance to most newcomers' current circumstances or to their past experiences would provide more beneficial coverage.

The most widely used Canadian text reported was *Canadian Concepts* (Berish & Thibaut, 1992, 1993). Although this series may be popular for other reasons, the Canadian content is relatively superficial and generic in nature, with a concentration on North American or European practices. For example, in *Canadian Concepts 2* (Berish & Thibaut, 1992), we counted only four pages that could be described as specifically Canadian. These included such information as weather patterns and the fact that Canadian mailboxes are red. We did not count topics such as the description of meals

in Canada, which could just as easily be applied to many Western countries: "For supper, people often have soup with bread to begin the meal. A typical Canadian meal usually has meat, chicken or fish" (p. 77). This type of information does not go far enough in meeting LINC's mandate to teach "Canadian values."

Another text that is still used in some programs, *A new start—Canada: A functional course in basic spoken English and survival literacy* (Selman & Mrowicki, 1984), includes functional language skill instruction, but has little content that is exclusively Canadian. The Canadian-specific detail is limited to superficial references to items such as social insurance numbers in a lesson on how to fill out a form.

Finally, we found that some Canadian and other commercial texts still in use are relatively old, dating from the 1970s and early 1980s. As a result, they contain cultural content that is inappropriate in the current era. For example, in a section of *New Horizons in English* called "Small Talk," students are taught how to participate in discussions about cowboys and Indians (Mellgren & Walker, 1980). These language skills may be more of a hindrance than a help to integration.

We took a closer look at materials that were used by more than five programs. By far the most popular series was *Canadian Concepts* (Berish & Thibadeau, 1992, 1993), used by 23 respondents, followed by the *Amazing Canadian* series (Bates, 1991), used by 12. The remaining seven most widely used texts included four that were non-Canadian (e.g., *Fundamentals of English Grammar*, Azar, 1992). Finally, *A Look at Canada* (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001) was reported to be commonly used. This publication, available on the Internet for citizenship applicants, is not explicitly intended for language classrooms, but it does address the full range of Canadian content categories.

Five of the top 10 most popular materials contained substantive cultural content. However, according to the categories under analysis (see Table 1), the cultural content categories covered in these five materials range from three to seven (see Table 2). On a positive note, all five texts contained at least some content related to developing implicit cultural values. The remaining five of the most popular LINC materials contained no substantive cultural content. This is not surprising given that three were not Canadian publications. The two that were—*Canadian Concepts* (Berish & Thibadeau, 1992, 1993) and *Canadian Crossroads* (Brod & Frankel, 1993)—touch only briefly on cultural themes.

After establishing which of the most popular materials had substantive cultural content, that is, 25% of the text consisting of material from categories listed in Table 1, we examined the distribution of participants who reported using at least one of these texts (see Table 3). We determined that 64% of the respondents contacted were using popular materials that had at least some

Table 2
Most Popular Materials by Amount and Range of Cultural Content

<i>Text</i>	<i>Substantive cultural content (≥ 25%)</i>	<i>Range of categories represented (0-7)</i>
<i>A Look at Canada</i> (CIC, 2001)	yes	5
<i>Amazing 2: Canadian Newspaper Stories</i> (Bates, 1997)	yes	6
<i>Amazing: Interviews and Conversations</i> (Bates, 1993)	yes	3
<i>Being Canadian</i> (Cameron & Derwing, 1996)	yes	7
<i>Canada, Coast to Coast</i> (Acosta, 1999)	yes	5
<i>Canadian Concepts Series</i> (Berish & Thibodeau, 1992, 1993)	no	4
<i>Canadian Crossroads</i> (Brod & Frankel, 1993)	no	2
<i>Expressways: Foundations</i> (Molinsky & Bliss, 1988)	no	0
<i>Fundamentals of English grammar</i> (Azar, 1992)	no	0
<i>Side by Side</i> (Molinsky & Bliss, 1983)	no	0

Canadian content. There was, however, considerable variability across programs. For example, one respondent used only *British Columbia: Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services* (Government of British Columbia, 2000), whereas another respondent used four resources that covered a full range of topics from the seven possible categories outlined in Table 1.

Which cultural values do teachers believe should be taught in their LINC classes, regardless of the texts available?

Sixty-one percent of the respondents reported that major issues such as equality, respect, legal rights, and so on were most important. Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that they did not teach culture at all. Others mentioned more explicit content such as talking about shopping. Interestingly, nearly all the respondents from publicly funded institutions viewed the major issues as important; those who did not were predominantly from private programs or nongovernmental organizations. When we compared content in the most popular texts with what the majority of respondents had stated was important, we found that only five of the 11 most popular texts dealt with such topics and that only half the respondents used textbooks that provided coverage of these issues. Thus many texts do not meet the content requirements identified by the teachers.

How do teachers compensate for perceived gaps in the available material?

Because of the potential limitations of the materials evaluated, we also asked teachers to comment on whether they perceived gaps in the materials available for LINC and to comment on strategies they used to fill these gaps. The

Table 3
Distribution of Participants Using at Least One Text With Explicit and Implicit Material

<i>Province</i>	<i>% of programs using texts with substantive cultural concepts</i>	<i>Range of cultural categories represented</i>
Ontario	52	5-7
Alberta	88	5-7
British Columbia	100	4-7
All programs	64	4-7

most common complaints were that there was a general lack of material covering LINC themes; there was not enough material specific to the province of residence; much of the available material was too difficult linguistically; some material was out of date; and there was not enough textbook coverage of cultural values. Interestingly, 34% of the participants who responded indicated that there were no gaps in the material available; all but two of these individuals were from private programs or nongovernmental organizations. This indicates that a third of those surveyed felt that relying on the materials we analyzed was sufficient to meet LINC's mandate. Of those respondents who did not perceive gaps, more than a third were not using any texts that were rated as having substantive Canadian content.

The teachers who indicated frustration with the available material employed a variety of strategies to deal with the gaps. Several stated that they prepared their own activities and sought out non-ESL resources such as media clips, newspapers, and guest speakers. Participants commented that these resources provided a good starting point for discussion.

What obstacles do teachers face in implementing LINC's "Canadian values" mandate?

A significant number of teachers felt that a major obstacle was their own lack of knowledge concerning what culture is. Others were unsure how to balance teaching about dominant Canadian values and those held by some groups represented in the LINC classroom (e.g., equality of women). Although only a few mentioned such difficulties, the fact that 22% of respondents reported that they did not teach Canadian values at all suggests that such uncertainty may be more widespread.

Others suggested that the problem with teaching cultural content had less to do with the materials available than with the proficiency level of the students. Our respondents had mixed opinions about the appropriateness of the LINC mandate for newcomers. Although many indicated that it was essential to teach Canadian values, several individuals stated that these often abstract topics were simply too difficult to convey to students at lower levels. As one of the teachers put it, "LINC is settlement, not citizenship." In other

words, in LINC, students can learn survival English, but they are not ready linguistically for higher-level concepts. Not surprisingly, there were proportionately more responses of this type in BC and Alberta than in Ontario, where LINC is funded to level 5. At the time of the survey, LINC was funded to only level 3 in BC and Alberta.

Only a small minority of the respondents felt there were no obstacles to implementing cultural values. Some of the more optimistic responses included the following: "By the time students graduate from LINC 3, they are ready to participate in all aspects of Canadian culture" and "Yes, they learn the language, culture, values, and job preparation skills needed."

There are some difficulties associated with interpreting the figures reported in this article. First, material that appears to provide a good range of content may be quite limited in terms of its coverage in some areas. For example, *Canadian Currents* (Singh & Morrison, 1995) covers five of the seven cultural categories, but it does so in only a cursory fashion. On the surface, this text may seem comprehensive, but only 11% is actually devoted to cultural content. It offers little to engage learners in the exploration of their own experience, which is what Ilieva (2000) argues is so important. Other textbooks may give more extensive coverage, but in only a limited number of categories such as *Amazing 2: Canadian Newspaper Stories* (Bates, 1997) (see Table 4). Thirty-one percent of this text is devoted to Canadian content in three categories, including content directed at raising awareness of some implicit cultural values.

Another problem associated with determining the amount of cultural content brought into the classroom via these materials is that teachers' use of Canadian material varies widely even in the same institution. Thus in contexts where such material is employed, it may not be used in every class. At the same time, many teachers augment texts with content that they bring from other sources such as newspapers or materials that they create themselves, but we were unable to include supplementary materials in this analysis.

Discussion

The results of the LINC textbook analysis demonstrate that most texts generally do not adequately meet the "Canadian values" mandate. Ilieva (2000) concluded her study of one Canadian commercial ESL resource by calling on textbook writers to present "less unitary portrayals of Canadian society" (p. 60) and to allow for more negotiation of the learners' roles in their adopted homeland. Although we agree with the view that not all aspects of culture can be taught explicitly, part of the problem might be remedied through instruction that gives some attention to developing the learner's ability to process cultural experiences outside the classroom through what Ilieva (2001) describes as an ethnographic approach. Despite

Table 4
Text-Analysis of *Amazing 2: Canadian Newspaper Stories* (Bates, 1997)

<i>Cultural category</i>	<i>No. of pages of cultural content</i>	<i>Canada specific (CA)/North American (NA)</i>	<i>Examples of topics covered</i>
Geography	14	CA	City, provincial
History	0		
Government	2	CA	House of Commons
Law/Policy	0		
Functional Language	0		
Cultural Facts	18	CA	Hockey, description of First Nations art
		NA	Marriage customs
Cultural Values	17	CA	Multiculturalism, immigration
		NA	Helping others (e.g., adoptions refugees), education, environment, appropriate attire
Total # of pages of cultural content	51/181 (28%)		

the limitations imposed by the classroom setting, there are some resources that have the potential to contribute to learners' cultural knowledge and experience.

Unfortunately, evaluating and choosing materials is no simple task. Ilieva (2000) and Cortazzi and Jin (1999) argue that there is a common assumption that because a text is published, it is a legitimate source of knowledge. Furthermore, as Ilieva (2000) and Richards (1984) suggest, market forces often dictate content in ways that may be less than informed in terms that are of greatest benefit to specific target groups.

Our question concerning the most important values LINC teachers believed should be taught, regardless of available material, yielded positive results. Responses indicated that the majority of teachers were aware of the sorts of topics LINC is intended to represent. Many were also aware that the textbooks available did not adequately cover these important topics, and they cited creative attempts to deal with the problem through appeal to outside material. Despite this clear recognition of the types of themes LINC represents, our question about obstacles faced by teachers in meeting this mandate raises concerns both about teacher preparedness and about the upper proficiency limit set for LINC.

Teacher Preparation

Courchène (1996) pondered how cultural values could be addressed with students if teachers themselves were unsure as to what constitutes Canadian culture. He suggested that teacher preparation and inservice workshops in Canadian culture and multiculturalism were crucial if the teaching of culture was to be successful. Sauvé (1996) went further, arguing that a general understanding of culture is insufficient. She suggested that professional development should include learning about the cultures of specific groups of newcomers. Haneda (2002) argued that L2 teachers must learn to ask themselves the same types of questions about culture that ESL students may ask. Such reflective teaching develops empathy.

Teachers' concerns that instruction in "Canadian values" must provide a balance between the dominant values and minority group values is a politically sensitive issue. Dominant values should be taught not for purposes of emulation, but precisely because they are dominant and thus need to be understood by newcomers so that they make their own choices. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that teaching about a dominant culture can be empowering rather than stifling. At the same time, teaching about the dominant culture need not detract from the importance of the students' own cultural backgrounds or preclude the introduction of concepts from Canada's many less dominant cultures in the LINC classroom. Admittedly, finding a balance is not easy.

Although addressing the issue of teacher preparation is essential, encouraging increased professionalism in LINC programs is complicated by the parallel but conflicting cost-effectiveness mandate introduced by the government (Employment and Immigration Canada, October, 1991). Private enterprises are funded to offer programs without clear standards. This policy has led to a weakening of professionalism in the field, with many private programs hiring less qualified or unqualified instructors in order to save on salary costs (Cleghorn, 2000; Sauvé, 1996).

LINC Upper Limit

The concern that the proficiency level of students prohibits coverage of "Canadian values" must also be addressed. Many of those who indicated that they did not deal with cultural values cited the students' language level as a deciding factor. Thus the LINC mandate may be incompatible with the proficiency levels that are funded. If the mandate is to be fulfilled, LINC should support students to a higher level of proficiency in Alberta and BC.¹ When the program was first introduced, there was a sense that it would allow immigrants to attain sufficient English (at level 3) to be able to continue to learn on their own through contact with Canadians in their daily lives. In fact, it has become glaringly apparent that LINC level 3 does not provide an adequate language base, and it is particularly inadequate for those people

who come to Canada with high-level occupational skills (Krahn, Derwing, Mulder, & Wilkinson, 2000).

A Student Perspective

A different perspective on the role of proficiency in providing ESL students with access to cultural knowledge and values comes from ESL students themselves. Hart and Cumming (1997) gathered information on students' experiences from LINC graduates in Ontario. The overwhelming theme that emerged from the survey was that LINC was too limited in scope, providing only very basic language skills and knowledge of Canada. Most of the former ESL students interviewed believed that LINC was only a starting point and that they had a lot more to learn. Many of the former LINC students in Hart and Cumming's study felt that they did not receive language instruction to a high enough level to allow integration into Canadian society. After finishing LINC, students still relied on family and friends for accessing basic government, health, and legal services. They also cited low proficiency as a major barrier to finding jobs for which they were otherwise qualified.

Conclusion

The continued development of suitable curricular materials should be accompanied by proactive initiatives in teacher preparation. Strategies for teaching what native-born Canadians take for granted should be developed. Many implicit cultural values have not been articulated in teacher education programs and ESL texts. Our goal as ESL instructors should be to specify the underlying complexities of such values and to develop pedagogical approaches for conveying this knowledge to students. Thus although newcomers may or may not develop these values, at least they will be better equipped to understand their adopted country.

Although there is a clear need for access to higher proficiency language classes, it is also important for federal and provincial governments to focus on integration from a more comprehensive standpoint. Several studies (e.g., Krahn et al., 2000; Reitz, 2001) indicate that there are occupational barriers for newcomer professionals. The term *integration* connotes accommodation, both on the part of newcomers and on the part of people who have been here longer. This can only happen with direct contact. For most adults, the main source of contact is employment. Unfortunately, one of the implicit cultural values that immigrants learn outside the classroom is that in Canada we do not value the education and skills that newcomers bring. This is a reality that is not addressed in any of the Canadian texts currently used in LINC classrooms, but it is one issue that we need to resolve.

Note

¹Citizenship and Immigration Canada now funds LINC 4 in Alberta; the provincial government in BC is now responsible for newcomer ESL (now called ELSA).

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